

AIR FORCE FITNESS PROGRAM QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

(As of 19 Aug 09)

1. *Why did the Air Force revise the Air Force Fitness Program?*

Answer: CMSAF McKinley requested an Air Force Audit (summer 2008) and it clearly revealed the fitness program needed significant improvement.

2. *What did the Air Force Fitness Audit reveal?*

Answer: Commanders did not consistently take action for members not meeting fitness standards and did not properly implement fitness testing – Unit programs did not engender a “culture of fitness”

3. *When will the new Fitness Program be effective?*

Answer: The revised program will take effect 1 Jan 2010.

4. *What is the CSAF's vision and expectation of a new and improved Fitness Program?*

Answer: A fitness program that is: Clear, understandable, and much simpler. He expects a new fitness program supporting a year-round fitness culture, providing visible score increases for improved performance, and a clear message that health and fitness are directly related to mission accomplishment. Airmen should incorporate a “year-around culture of fitness” into their daily lives.

5. *I never have to run a mile and half in combat, and the enemy doesn't care how big my waist is. Why didn't the AF adopt a combat-performance test?*

Answer: This was never the intention in revising the fitness program. The intention was to design a science-based test that incorporates health-based standards across all fitness components. Our goal in revising the program was to motivate Airmen to improve their health and fitness by rewarding incremental improvement and moving them from Unsatisfactory to Satisfactory and from Satisfactory to Excellent, thereby reducing their health risk both now and in the future. The next generation of AF fitness program may incorporate AFSC-specific requirements and combat-type activities, but that may be several years in the future.

6. *Will Airmen test more than once a year?*

Answer: Yes. Each Airman will test twice a year – some AF Reserve and ANG personnel will test once a year.

7. *When will twice-a-year fitness testing cycles begin?*

Answer: The CSAF mandated all Airmen will fitness test during the first half of calendar year 2010. Airmen will be required to test before the end of the month in which they are due. For example:

- If your last test was 5 Jan 09, your next test will be in Jan 10 to begin your 6 month cycle, then again in Jul 10, etc.
- If your last test was 2 Mar 09, your next test will be in Mar 10 to begin your 6 month cycle, then again in Sep 10, etc.

- If your last test was 7 Jul 09, your next test will be in Jan 10 to begin your 6 month cycle, then again in Jul 10, etc.
- If you test 15 Sep 09, you will test again in Mar 10 to begin your 6 month cycle, then again in Sep 10, etc.
- If you test 29 Dec 09, you will test again in Jun 10 to begin your 6 month cycle, then again in Dec 10, etc.

8. *The other services run longer distances and allow more time for pushups and situps. Why didn't the AF change these aspects of the test to be more in line with the other services?*

Answer: We could have increase running distance to 2 or 3 miles, and changed the pushup and situp times to 2 minutes instead of 1 minute. However, all we would have gotten was a longer test. Consensus among fitness experts indicates that we can adequately gauge a member's fitness with a 1 ½ mile run and 1 minute each of pushups and situps.

9. *Who maintains the sole responsibility to meet and maintain Air Force fitness standards?*

Answer: Each Airman is responsible for meeting and maintaining fitness standards. Commanders have the responsibility of their unit fitness program. The new fitness AFI will more clearly emphasize each Airman's responsibility to meet and maintain fitness standards.

10. *Who will conduct fitness tests and where will the program be administered?*

Answer: Trained civilian employees will conduct fitness tests. The fitness program will be administered at new centrally located Fitness Assessment Cells (FAC). For GSUs or other locations with less than 1K military members, members may travel to the closest base with a FAC (commander discretion) or Physical Training Leaders and/or Unit Fitness Program Managers will continue to administer the test at the GSU location.

11. *Why did the Air Force create Fitness Assessment Cells (FAC)?*

Answer: To reduce administrative burden on squadrons and maximize objectivity in testing.

12. *Will the component weighing on the fitness test change? If so, why?*

Answer: Yes. The aerobic run will account for 60% and body composition 20% -- muscle fitness (crunches and pushups) will remain 10% each. The component weighing was changed to incorporate science-based criterion along the health/fitness hierarchy. As an indication of overall fitness, Aerobic > Body Composition > Muscle Fitness.

13. *Will there be minimum requirements for each fitness test component to pass the test?*

Answer: Yes, Airmen will be required to meet minimum component requirements and will still be required to have a composite score of 75 to pass the test. This ensures we have a more well-rounded test and that members must demonstrate a minimum level of proficiency in all components to pass the test.

14. *How were the minimum requirements for each component determined?*

Answer: For the aerobic and body composition (abdominal circumference) components, the minimum is established at the cut line between moderate and high health risk associated with that component. We want members to avoid the high health risk region in order to pass the test. For pushups and situps, the minimums were established at the 50th and 60th percentiles, respectively, for performance among the entire U.S. population based on widely-accepted fitness data.

15. Will the SG community continue to have ownership of the Fitness Program?

Answer: No. AF/A1 now is the OPR for the Fitness Program, but will continue to partner with the SG community in regards to the health aspects of overall fitness.

16. When will the new fitness AFI be published to the field?

Answer: The target is August 2009.

17. Will the Air Force Fitness Management System (AFFMS) continue to support the Air Force Fitness Program?

Answer: Yes. The system will be enhanced to provide detailed, “dynamic” feedback on fitness results with the goal to help Airmen improve in targeted areas.

18. Will the 5-year age groupings change?

Answer: Yes. Age groupings will change to 10-year groups (< 30, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60+). These changes are science based and more simple.

19. Will there be new commander guidance on administrative actions for failed fitness tests?

Answer: Yes. Commanders will now be allowed to take administrative action for first time failures if they feel it’s warranted. The commander will be given an available options table in the Fitness AFI to provide clear guidance and focus on recommended actions based on number of failed tests.

20. I’ve heard that there will be “random” or “no-notice” fitness tests. Is that true?

Answer: No, that is not true. Members will be required to test twice a year. However, members may require an “out of cycle” test in order to ensure currency for a deployment, assignment, etc. Commanders may institute “practice” or “diagnostic” tests in order to gauge a member’s progress, but such a test will not be counted as an “official” test or entered into AF FMS for documentation purposes. Members will always know when their next scheduled test is required.

21. How will the CSAF keep fitness on his radar and as a top priority?

Answer: Fitness metrics will be reported in regular increments from unit to wing to MAJCOM.

22. In what other ways will the Air Force measure fitness compliance?

Answer: We will incorporate fitness into the IG arena in future Unit Compliance Inspections (UCI). This will ensure overall compliance in the administration and execution of the fitness program, not whether all members in a unit or wing can pass the test.

23. *Can an Airman have a documented failed fitness test as of the close out date of their evaluation and still receive an overall "5" EPR?*

Answer: No. The revised AFI 36-2406, "Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems" will ensure no Airmen with a referral report (for fitness or other reasons) will receive an overall "5" rating.

24. *How will other personnel actions be affected by a member's fitness category?*

Answer: Officers and enlisted members will be required to have a passing, current fitness score to be selected for or attend PME. All members must have a current fitness test in order to deploy. There are other restrictions regarding retraining, reenlistment eligibility, and assignment eligibility that could be impacted by a failed fitness score, especially if such a score results in a referral OPR or EPR. The appropriate AFIs will be updated to reflect the impact fitness results have on these personnel programs.

25. *Will commanders still be required to provide fitness time during duty-hours?*

Answer: Commanders will continue to emphasize the importance of fitness and provide Airmen fitness time during duty hours when mission permits, but will no longer be mandated by AFI-248 to allocate fitness time during "traditional" duty hours. Again, it is every Airman's responsibility to achieve and maintain AF Fitness standards.

26. *Will the new program allow Airmen who fail a fitness test to retest prior to 42 days?*

Answer: Yes. The current rule which mandates a 42-day waiting period following a failed fitness test will be eliminated. With the new program, with Commander approval Airmen may volunteer to retest prior to the 42-day period if they are medically able and ready to test.

27. *What fitness categories will be used?*

Answer: Since fitness is a readiness issue, the AF will use ORI/UCI-type scoring categories to reflect members' results. Excellent (> 90.0), Satisfactory (75.0 – 89.9), and Unsatisfactory (< 75.0) will replace the current categories of Excellent, Good, and Poor.

28. *Will there be any incentives for members who clearly demonstrate fitness excellence?*

Answer: Yes. Patches are being designed for wear on the PT uniform. Patches will recognize both one-time and sustained (four consecutive tests over 2 years) performance in the Excellent category (composite score of > 90), and for scoring a perfect 100.

29. *What if I have a profile that prevents me from doing one or more components of the test?*

Answer: The AF will no longer use the ergo cycle or the 3-mile walk as alternate aerobic tests. Instead, members who cannot run based on a profile will perform a 1-mile walk that will determine VO2 max capability. Also, if member is exempt from any component, members will only be categorized as "pass" or "fail".